



Montana Gathering of Friends

August 2020

Gathering Virtually while Staying Safer at Home

Invitation to a Virtual

Montana Gathering of Friends (MGOF), August 14, 15, and 16, 2020

In this time of enormous global challenges, widespread division and upheaval, we are led to deepen our spiritual lives and strengthen our connections.

Our life in the Spirit is a breathing in and a breathing out.

Breathing in, we seek to find and cherish our deep spiritual centers, the roots which ground us.

Breathing out, we look to our Quaker values to lead us to help heal our wider community,
imaging a just and compassionate world.

This summer MGOF will venture into the brave new world of the virtual Quaker gathering. MGOF gatherings have been times to step back from our lives, to connect with each other in worship, in reflection and deep listening and through music and play. Ministry and Counsel and the MGOF planning committee carry the hope that much of that same essence of MGOF will shine through as we meet online. We hope that this virtual gathering will speak to this community's heart and soul and perhaps the online space will even work for us in new and unexpected ways.

We are enormously pleased to have the good fortune to virtually bring Carrie Newcomer, singer-songwriter, writer and poet, educator and wise voice for social transformation as our plenary speaker. Carrie will lead us in considering our theme, helping us to explore questions leading toward hope and healing with what she describes as "Gardening in the Dark". This will be followed by break-out sessions for our usual worship-sharing groups.

We hope that Friends will join us in what promises to be a rich time of renewal and deepening.

Summer 2020 Virtual Gathering

FRIDAY AUGUST 14

- 2:30-4:00 Ministry & Counsel ZOOM
4:00-5:30 Steering Committee ZOOM
5:30-6:00 Youth Coordinator ZOOM with parents, volunteers

BREAK

- 7:00-8:00 Common ZOOM to share names and locations, experience technology, breakout rooms, etc.

SATURDAY AUGUST 15

- 8:30-9:30 Common ZOOM for Plenary speaker. Separate breakout room for Youth Program (with approved adult volunteers)

BREAK

- 10:00-11:30 Pre-assigned Worship Sharing Groups (Ministry & Council will assign 1 week in advance)
Separate breakout room for Youth Program (with approved adult volunteers)

LONG BREAK

- 1:30-3:00 Series of Interest Groups (Need to be defined in advance, start with common ZOOM, enter breakout groups)

BREAK

- 4:00-5:30 Common ZOOM for Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business Separate breakout room for Youth Program (with approved adult volunteers)

LONG BREAK

- 7:00-9:00 Common ZOOM for Community Night (MC/schedule needed)

SUNDAY AUGUST 16

- 8:30-10:00 Pre-assigned Worship Sharing Group Separate breakout room for Youth Program (with approved adult volunteers)

BREAK

- 10:30-11:00 Common ZOOM for Singing, rolls into Worship (Only one singer can be heard at a time)
11:00-12:00 Common ZOOM Meeting for Worship followed by Joys & Concerns



Carrie Newcomer is a songwriter, recording artist, performer

and educator. She has been described as a “prairie mystic” by the Boston Globe and “ “asks all the right questions” by Rolling Stone, “a voice as rich as Godiva chocolate.” by The Austin Statesman, and “She's the kind of artist whose music makes you stop, think and then say, 'that is so true” by The Dallas Morning News.” She has toured with Alison Krauss Europe and the U.S. Nickel Creek recorded Newcomer’s song “I Should’ve Known Better”, on their Grammy-winning album This Side. In the fall of 2009 and 2011 Newcomer was a cultural ambassador to India invited by the American Embassy of India. In October 2011 she released her interfaith collaborative benefit album Everything is Everywhere with world master of the Indian Sarod, Amjad Ali Khan. In June 2012 Carrie Newcomer traveled to Kenya, Africa performing in schools, hospitals, spiritual communities and AIDS hospitals. In 2013 Carrie visited organizations dedicated to non-violent conflict resolution through the arts

and the empowerment of women in the Middle East. Huffington Post Religion Community listed her song “Holy as the Day is Spent” as one of the best spiritual songs of 2012. . She was listed as one of “The 50 most influential folk musicians of the past 50 years” by Chicago’s WFMT and Boston’s WBEZ listed her as one of the most influential folk artists of the last 25 years. In 2014 Available Light Records released A Permeable Life. Newcomer also has 14 nationally releases on the Concord/Rounder Records including; The Geography of Light, The Gathering of Spirits and Before and After.

In 2014 Newcomer also released her first companion book A Permeable Life: Poems and Essays. A Permeable Life was in part influenced by Newcomer’s friendships and recent collaborations with influential authors, scientists and theologians, including Parker J. Palmer, Jill Bolte Taylor, Phillip Gulley, Scott Russell Sanders and Rabbi Sandy Sasso.

Recent appearances on PBS Religion and Ethics and National Award Winning Krista Tippett’s On Being, as well have focused on her use of songwriting as a spiritual practice, as well as her work in social justice and interfaith dialogue.

Newcomer, a contemplative Quaker, cuts across secular and spiritual boundaries. In recent years, Newcomer has emerged as a prominent voice for progressive spirituality, social and environmental justice. Carrie internationally facilitates workshops and presents keynotes on the topics of songwriting, spirituality & vocation in secular, college/educational and spiritual settings.

Visit her site to find out more: <https://www.carrienewcomer.com/home>

Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

February 22, 2020, Camp Mak-A-Dream

The meeting opened with a period of worshipful silence.

Presiding Clerk, Noorjahan Parwana, called Friends to a period of remembrance of loved ones who have passed: Alice Miller, Elsie Tuss, Russel Salisbury, and Bob Taylor. It was pointed out that the Great Falls Worship Group recently has lost 4 people to death.

Minutes from the August 17, 2019 business meeting were read and approved as read.

YOUTH SAFETY POLICY (attached): Nick Salmon reviewed the main points of the updated Youth Policy. This policy applies only to scheduled youth program times. Those who work with our youth must have a background check before each event. No “walk-ins “ or spontaneous volunteers are permitted to work with youth.

The policy has a new section that sets out parameters for the participation of registered sex offenders. Many questions arose around how sex offenders would be identified and how to make the policy known to offenders. Although

Steering Committee had recommended the entire policy be approved as written, Friends felt uncomfortable with accepting this part of the policy without more seasoning.

MINUTE: The updated Youth Safety policy is approved with the exception of Section 4, which pertains to sex offenders. Section 4 will be revisited by an ad hoc committee in the spring.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Jim Humphrey reported that while the switch to Quick Books to track our finances was approved at the summer gathering, this did not work out. Jim, Noor, Presiding Clerk, and Cathy Weber, Treasurer, met in January to find a way forward. Members of the Finance Committee and the Treasurer are working to develop a new format for the Treasurer's report. As an aside, it was recommended the Treasurer's report not be published in the newsletter as it might lead to a scammer taking advantage of the information.

Copies of the proposed 2020 budget were distributed. The Steering Committee has reviewed this document and recommends it be adopted without changes.

The abundant giving approach to MGOF finances has resulted in a positive income for the past year. It has not been necessary to tap the Contingency Fund. Review of the monies collected for this winter gathering shows that income exceeds expenses by \$600.

MINUTE: The 2020 proposed budget (attached) is accepted as written.

The budget has a line item named "Contingency". In response to a Friend's request of who determines how this money is allocated, the Steering Committee will be tasked with developing a policy on how the money will be spent.

The Steering Committee asked members of the Finance Committee to propose a policy regarding the collection and payment of the annual NPYM assessment by MGOF Monthly Meeting. The committee recommends the Recording Clerk provide the actual number of members. M&C will review the membership list to ensure it contains only Friends who are active at some level. The Recording Clerk and Treasurer will determine how many members will be paid for each year. The NPYM invoice will be sent to the Treasurer who will send letters to members requesting they pay their assessment (\$60/member/yr currently). Attenders will also be given opportunities to donate in support of the NPYM assessment process. If the collected monies are less than needed, no funds will be taken from the Quarterly account.

MINUTE: Friends approved of the adoption of the assessment payment procedure (attached) as suggested by the Finance Committee.

MIGRANT FUND: This winter the Bozeman Worship Group learned of migrant families in their area who were in need. The worship group has been working with 2 families, helping them with winter clothing and household goods. Around Christmas, Bozeman Friends sent MGOF meetings and worship groups a request for monetary donations to assist with this work. Also, the group has received a donation from the Schwab Foundation.

MINUTE: MGOF Monthly Meeting adopts, as its own, the Migrant Project that was begun by the Bozeman Worship Group.

MINISTRY AND COUNSEL: The committee has been meeting via Zoom and met again yesterday afternoon. M&C recognizes its need for more members and plans to contact each meeting and worship group in MGOF, requesting they select a person from their group to serve as a representative to M&C. The Presiding Clerk will send out these letters of request.

M&C reviewed the membership list of the MGOF Monthly meeting. They noted Friend David Henderson has not been active or in contact with the meeting. After trying to contact him without success in accordance with the process described in Faith and Practice, they suggest his membership be terminated.

MINUTE: Friends approved that David Henderson's membership in the MGOF Monthly Meeting be terminated.

A group of individuals has been worshipping in the Red Lodge area. Julia Child will discuss with the group the possibility of becoming a formal worship group.

The Big Sky Worship Group under the care of Bozeman has not been meeting. M&C will contact them to offer support.

Tina Visscher shared a minute (attached) that was drafted following the rich plenary session yesterday morning. The minute is titled "Diversity of Faith in Practice". The queries from worship sharing groups this weekend will be attached to the minute. The minute will be circulated within MGOF and the addition of action items will be determined.

COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY: Geoff Poole has submitted a report detailing his work. See the attachment.

SUMMER MGOF COORDINATOR: Claire Leonard has written a report the August 2019 summer gathering. (Attached)

A Friend noted that she misses hearing reports from our AFSC and FCNL representatives.

MGOF HANDBOOK: Work on the handbook continues but many questions remain. Claire Leonard distributed a list of questions and requests feedback.

VISITING FRIEND: Joe Snyder of Multnomah Meeting has presented to us a letter of introduction from his meeting. The letter was read and Friends are encouraged to write comments on it. Joe reported the NPYM Outreach and Visitation Committee is looking for someone from Montana to be a traveling visitor in 2021.

NPYM NOMINATING: Ted Etter, Clerk of NPYM Nominating Committee, reported there openings for MGOF Friends to be on the Western Friend board, the Outreach and Visitation Committee and Ministry and Counsel. Annual session will be in Missoula in 2021 and 2022.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Tina Visscher reported the committee is looking for someone to fill the Recording Clerk position beginning this spring.

The meeting closed with a period of silent worship. Respectfully submitted,
Jo Ann Kidder, Recording Clerk

Montana Gathering of Friends Steering Committee Meeting Feb 21, 2020 at Camp Mak A Dream

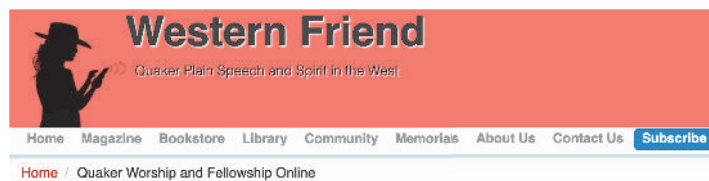
PRESENT: Noorjahan Parwana, Clerk, Susan Wadsworth, Georgia Foster, Claire Leonard, Julia Child, Jim Humphrey, Nick Salmon, Judy Visscher, Jo Ann Kidder, Larry Leonard, Tina Visscher, and Sandy Boehmler.

The meeting began with a period of silent worship. Friends then shared thoughts and recent news of their lives.

CONSENT AGENDA:

The minutes of the October 13, 2019 Steering Committee meeting were accepted after correcting the dates of the spring Quarterly meeting from April 13-14, 2020 to April 11-12.

Our Child Safety policy has recently been updated. (Attached). Our policy is based on that of North Pacific Yearly Meeting (NPYM). Friends who work with our youth must undergo a background check before each gathering. NPYM facilitates these checks and pays \$10 per person to have them done. The revised policy contains a new section dealing with the presence of a registered sex offender at MGOF functions. MINUTE: The Steering Committee recommends that Meeting for Worship for Business accept this updated policy.



Quaker Worship and Fellowship Online

~ Due to ongoing security concerns, online meeting platforms are being altered daily.

If you find any online meeting for worship to be "glitchy," don't give up. Please try again, another day, soon!

"How To" use the Zoom videoconferencing platform.

"How To" friendly online security

"How To" friendly breakout rooms online

ONLINE WORSHIP (scheduled, videoconferences)

First Day / Sunday

8:15 AM Pacific = 9:15 AM Mountain — Multnomah Meeting (Portland, OR, early session) as host

9:00 AM Pacific = 10:00 AM Mountain — Boulder Meeting as host

9:00 AM Pacific = 10:00 AM Mountain — Colorado Springs Meeting as host

9:00 AM Pacific = 10:00 AM Mountain — Eugene Meeting (early session) as host

9:00 AM Pacific = 10:00 AM Mountain — Friends in Recovery as host

9:00 AM Pacific = 10:00 AM Mountain — Grass Valley Meeting (Nevada City, CA) as host

9:00 AM Pacific = 10:00 AM Mountain = 11:00 AM Central — Mexico City Meeting as host



9:30 AM Pacific = 10:30 AM Mountain — Montana Gathering of Friends as host



Looking for online worship?

go to [WesternFriend.org](https://westernfriend.org), and on the page pictured above, you can click on MGOF, or go straight to the Zoom link here:

<https://westernfriend.org/qwfo-montana-gathering-friends>

DISCUSSION QUESTION: What decisions are made in committee and what decisions are seasoned in committee and then forwarded to business meeting with a recommendation that business meeting accept them? Friends make major decisions in business meetings and do administrative work in committee. We must trust committees to do thorough and spirit-led work. Committees are the place to discuss the pros and cons of an issue. In MGOF when a decision must be made in a timely fashion, the Steering Committee is the appropriate place to act.

MINISTRY AND COUNSEL: Members of the committee are Judy Visscher, Clerk, Noor Parwana, Presiding Clerk, Julia Child, Kate Weiss, Claire Leonard, and Lucretia Humphrey. The committee has been meeting via Zoom recently. It is felt the committee needs more members. To achieve this, they will contact MGOF meetings and worship groups to request these groups send representative to serve M&C.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: An earlier decision to change the way MGOF finances are kept by using Quick Books did not work out. A

member of the Finance Committee and the Presiding Clerk met with the Treasurer in January to find a way forward. It was agreed the finances would be tracked using Excel. The Treasurer, with the assist of the Finance Committee, will keep track of donations and send a report to each Friend who contributed over \$250 in the previous year. The logistics of this are yet to be ironed out. The effort to help the Treasurer produce reports based on standard charts of accounts is ongoing.

Many Finance decisions and actions are dictated by IRS regulations. This is complicated because IRS regulations are not a good fit for our Quaker organization.

A question arose of how NPYM assessments for members of MGOF Monthly Meeting should be paid. Should we pay the full amount for each member and if the actual donations by members fall short, the difference would be made up from the quarterly treasury? Or should we choose an amount we have paid in the past that is less than the \$60/member assessment yet more in keeping with what is actually submitted? Should attenders be offered the chance to make donations to NPYM? The committee will season this question until the spring meeting.

The Bozeman Worship Group has begun a social justice project focused on working with migrants in their area. It began with a conversation and has grown into Bozeman working with two families through mentor teams. The Bozeman Worship Group has sent letters to MGOF meetings and worship groups requesting funds to help support their work. They have also received a large donation from the Schwab Foundation.

MINUTE: The Steering Committee recommends to business meeting that MGOF Monthly Meeting adopt the Migrant Project of the Bozeman Worship Group.

COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY: Friends are advised to read this report from Geoff Poole that has been recently distributed.

NEWSLETTER: We will hear this report at the spring meeting.

HANDBOOK: The committee has been working on this draft and hopes to meet with interested Friends this evening to obtain input. Committees are encouraged to read handbook sections that relate to their committee to insure those sections are accurate.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: A person is needed to fill the Recording Clerk position beginning in April. The positions of spring and fall gathering coordinator are yet to be filled. Kate Weiss is available to mentor the person who agrees to do the coordinating work.

SUMMER GATHERING COORDINATOR: The Coordinator of the 2019 summer gathering, Claire Leonard, has distributed her report. Friends are encouraged to read it. Larry Leonard will be the coordinator for Summer 2020. He has reserved the facility and has set the gathering date for August 13-16.

REMEMBERING A FRIEND: Alice Miller, who recently died, will be remembered during the early morning worship meeting tomorrow morning at 7:00am.

ITEM FOR FUTURE AGENDA: Under the section of "Miscellaneous Expenses", the proposed budget for 2020 has a line item titled "Contingency" with an amount of \$1600. A Friend would like to have a discussion of how the allotment of these funds will be decided.

The meeting closed with a period of silent worship.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann Kidder, Recording Clerk

Bozeman Worship Group Migrant Project

After a Fall business meeting our worship group decided to see if there was a social justice project we could be involved with as a group. Soon after this Peter Husby heard that there were Honduran immigrant families here that needed help. Heather, Tina and Peter met with the English Learner Coordinator of the Bozeman School District. She reported a huge influx of non-English-speaking students and that they didn't have any winter clothes. This was our first project.

We continued to meet with her and eventually put together a family mentor program that matched a group of mentors to each household. They help the family access community resources and some teach English. A few have been involved in getting people to ICE appointments and district court. Tina Visscher is the coordinator of the program which has served 13 families (11 presently). Tim and Peter are mentors and Heather assists Tina in figuring out how to implement the program and how to get funds.

In addition, the meeting holds a fund that helps with things we can't find in the community. Two meeting members review requests. One of the mentors has just started a non-profit called South-North-Nexus that can now receive donations for legal support. The school district can receive tax-deductible donations for the project as well. We have just organized informal summer English classes for some of the children and are going to write a grant to provide much more next summer.

We are trying to get educated about immigration issues and processes. These are hard times for immigrants politically plus the stresses of the pandemic. Our meeting has been very supportive of this work and we feel blessed. If you want more information you can contact Tina at tinavisscher@gmail.com or 406 556 8014.

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

AFSC is a Quaker organization that was founded in 1917 to assist victims of World War 1. It now includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace

and humanitarian service. AFSC's Mission Statement: "Guided by the Quaker belief in the divine light of each person, AFSC works with communities and partners worldwide to challenge unjust systems and promote lasting peace." Along with some British Quakers, AFSC was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947.

AFSC is currently making a concerted effort to renew its relationship with Quakers at the grass roots level; to reaffirm itself as a faith-based, Quaker organization.

Overview of Current AFSC Work

Engaging Quakers:

- Liaison Program with Monthly Meetings to leverage our collective voice to promote peace.
- Yearly Meeting representatives to AFSC.
- Online learning programs, learning tours, Youth in Action Immersion, others – see website.

Examples of AFSC Peace and Social Justice Activities:

- Palestinian children's rights – No Way to Treat a Child.
- Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program in Oregon: know your rights training for migrants.
- Arizona – challenging criminalization of migrants, oppose prison expansion, abolish private prisons.
- New Mexico – Farm to Foodbank Project: AFSC assists farmers, farmers, farmers donate food.
- Gaza – working to lift international sanctions to facilitate humanitarian aid, providing health kits.
- West Virginia – helping get food and hygiene supplies to those that need help during the pandemic.
- Mutual Aid Network – AFSC Pandemic Relief Fund.
- Internationally - helping migrants with physical spacing, medical supplies, shelter.
- Providing resources to Quakers about COVID 19: Facebook series, weekend reading emails.

AFSC is facing financial constraints and proposes to "shrink gracefully;" to become a leaner organization that maintains or even increases its effectiveness by building coalitions. We Quakers at the monthly meeting/worship group level are a critical part of that coalition building.

I am interested in being an AFSC Liaison to MGOF in order to keep all Montana Quakers informed about AFSC activities and to promote Montana Quaker involvement in AFSC work. I am currently a NPYM Representative to AFSC. It would be great if monthly meetings and worship groups were to designate AFSC Liaisons as well. Collectively, we can better promote peace and social justice.

Please see AFSC's website (afsc.org) for a wealth of information about its work and numerous online and on-the-ground training opportunities. Quakers around the world can play a significant role in implementing AFSC's programs. And, AFSC can help us serve the "least of these." As one example, the Bozeman Worship Group is advocating for Honduran migrant families in Gallatin County. AFSC's online "Changing Systems, Changing Ourselves" training can help us more effectively serve these people because it is based on input from those affected by discrimination and inequality.

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Update for MGOF by Tom Rawson

Please see the Friends Committee on National Legislation Report to Yearly Meetings at fcnl.org. It details the issues FCNL is working on, and notes some of the legislative successes we have had.

Additionally, the report describes FCNL's efforts to make its work accessible to Quakers and others throughout the nation through a strong community of Advocacy Teams whose "work

this year led to successful votes to repeal war authorization legislation." Contributing to this effort were these fifteen Advocacy Teams from the NPYM region:

Idaho:	Boise	Washington:
Montana:	Helena	Bellingham
	Missoula	Port Townsend
Oregon:	Corvallis	San Juan Islands
Eugene:	Portland	Seattle
	Rogue	Spokane
Valley (Medford area)		
Salem		

NPYM's representatives to FCNL have been busy supporting FCNL's work and serving as liaisons between FCNL and NPYM member meetings. Most of us attended FCNL's Annual Meeting in Washington DC in November 2019. Several of us serve on FCNL standing committees.

In the early months of 2020 we assisted NPYM member meetings and worship groups in participating in FCNL's biannual legislative priorities setting process, where FCNL seeks input from all its constituent meetings in determining which issues to work on in the upcoming session of Congress. This process was happening just as COVID-19 restrictions changed travel and in-person meeting options. Many meetings were able to conduct priorities-setting discernment via video conference.

The NPYM representatives to FCNL have received much invaluable assistance from other NPYM members who serve on FCNL's General Committee as At-Large Members. We are very grateful for that support.

Respectfully submitted by the NPYM FCNL

Representatives:

Paul Barker , Jasmine Krotkov ,Bob Maynard ,Tom Rawson ,Barbara Segal ,Maurice Warner

With much gratitude to At-Large Members of General Committee from NPYM:

Steven Aldrich, Jonathan Brown,Tom Ewell, Dorsey Green,Tom Krughoff, Susan Cozzens (representing AFSC on the FCNL General Committee)



"Good Brown"

By Kat Northup

I was a "Good Brown"
I smiled at your babies
So they'd grow up thinking
We all loved them.
I made myself shy
So you'd feel comfortable
And Un-threatened.
I spoke quietly
So you could choose to hear me
At your leisure
I worked hard
To pay for everyone else
And not have debt
I wore an apron growing up
So you wouldn't question my presence
Because being Brown
AND OURSELVES
Is a luxury
Those of us growing up here
Can't afford
Alone

Great Falls Worship Group

In the year of the pandemic, the Black Lives Matter Marches, and the horror of immigrant children being caged, out in Great Falls, Montana our small worship group continues to bring together seekers of truth and compassion. Meeting weekly in a Lutheran Church our numbers dwindled down to about 6-8 on a regular Sunday. We have missed several of our past regular attenders. They brought us gifts of the Spirit. We feel the loss of their presence.

Almost ironically the death of two of our member/attenders brought us to our best selves of deepening faith, working together with each other, and sharing our gifts as we journeyed through these dear friends' deaths and the memorial services we prepared. It was an amazing outreach to those beyond our Quaker group.

One exciting moment this past year was when we decided to fund two young adults from our community to attend the FCNL's Spring Lobby Weekend. It started with our now deceased attender, making a pledge to fund part of this opportunity on her last Sunday with us. From that time on the money was raised with her dear friends from beyond our Quaker group making a large contribution. The money was complete, and then the Pandemic quarantined all of us. The young people we had asked were unable to attend this year. We are keeping the money intact hoping that next year we can follow through.

With the closing of the Lutheran Church, we turned to Zoom for our meetings. And what a joy that has brought. We have invited the Helena WG, and made new friends, plus our own attendance has increased as it is easier for some to access Zoom than to attend in person. By sharing our meeting times with Western Friend, we have had guests from Canada, Florida and New Mexico, as well as others from other parts of North Pacific Yearly Meeting. What an unexpected gift.

Currently, we are looking into aspects of prison ministry through needs of the jails and prisons in Montana.

Our weekly worship is enhanced by monthly worship sharing, sometimes some education and discussion around what it means to be a Quaker, either from a Quaker Speaks video, or some other form of reading. Our hearts are bolstered by the comments of one new Friend who states that her finding the Friends has been a blessing and enabled her spirit to be strengthened. At the same time there seems to be a continuing hunger for greater awareness amongst us of the Living, Loving Presence to show forth in our lives



Missoula Monthly Meeting

The Missoula Monthly Meeting of Friends has spent a challenging but spirit-led year of discernment on how best to meet the spiritual needs of our community and to deepen our spiritual commitments and understandings. The Covid-19 virus has been a particular challenge, as Friends can no longer gather in person. The Meeting has responded both by conducting Meeting for Worship via Zoom and by adding a worship sharing (via Zoom) for an hour and a half prior to the Meeting for Worship. We decided to undertake this worship sharing in recognition of the difficulties Friends are facing due to the social isolation. Specifically, it was a way to explore how we can meet each other's need for spiritual companionship, witness each other's stories, and seek clarity on how we function as a Society of Friends through these difficult times. Our worship sharing began on April 12 under the leadership of Jack Rowan, a weighty and longtime Friend who drew on the history of Friends' responses to crises and presented reflections on ways of nurturing spiritual companionship. We have continued this process weekly, sending out queries during the week in preparation for the worship sharing. Examples of the queries include:

- How are we led to respond to those in our meeting/worship groups who are alone, sick, worried, experiencing economic need and/or grieving due to this outbreak?
- How are we led to hold in our embrace those in our meeting/worship groups who cannot participate in online fellowship?
- Is our Meeting able to adapt to an extended period of physical distancing protocols, and how do we envision what we might look like in the future?

The worship sharing has been inspirational and has deepened the sense of spirit in our Meeting for Worship. An additional benefit is that Quakers from other meetings are able to join us via Zoom, which has enriched our community and brought much joy. We have decided to continue to hold all of our meetings on Zoom for the time being, as the State recommends that those over age 65, or who have underlying health conditions, continue to shelter at home.

To help during this crisis, M&O has also gathered and sent to Friends a list of websites of local resources that are available in Missoula, including childcare, food security, housing needs, employee assistance, virus testing and school announcements. We have additionally informed Friends of ways that they can get involved as volunteers (with descriptions of need, expected background experience, and level of urgency).

Our meetings have seen many additional changes over this past year. Perhaps most significant, three Co-Clerks were nominated to share the Clerk responsibilities on a rotating basis, as there was no one individual able to take on the role of Clerk. This arrangement has worked well, although the Meeting is thrilled that Jack Rowan, who is a longtime member of Missoula Friends and has just finished a Divinity Degree from the Earlham School of Religion, has agreed to be Clerk for next year. Further, we have been invigorated by the presence of several new young Friends, who requested that we add an additional Meeting for Worship on Wednesday evenings, as they are unable to attend Meeting on Sunday mornings. At their suggestion, we have also added a book club reading and discussion of [White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism](#), by Robin DiAngelo. All of these events are currently being held on Zoom.

In addition, concern was raised that very few people were attending Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business (MWCB), even though Friends felt that it was important to the spiritual life of our meeting. We held a threshing session to discuss this and decided, on a pilot basis, to move the MWCB, which had been previously been held monthly at 9:00-11:00 AM, to 10:30-12:00 PM, preceded by a half hour of silent worship. The agenda for the MWCB is also being sent in advance of Meeting. Among many activities this year, we hosted Sarah Freeman-Woolpert from the Friends Committee on National Legislation, to conduct an advocacy training, and to collaborate with the Jeanette Rankin Resource Center to consider establishing an FCNL Advocacy Team in Missoula. We also conducted a threshing session with FCNL Advisory Board Member Jasmine Krotkov to consider our priorities for national legislation to guide FCNL in setting their national legislation work.

To strengthen our community and foster fellowship, we have also continued potluck dinners in Friend's homes during the summer and at Christmas time. One of the most delightful events is the annual Gingerbread House Making Party, where about 25 of us gathered over pizza to use

graham crackers, frosting and a wide assortment of candies to create amazing designs. The young boys and men particularly expanded the concept of what might be considered a house. There was much laughter and fellowship during the building phase and as we displayed finished products. Many of the Missoula Friends have also continued attending the quarterly meeting held by the Montana Gathering of Friends (MGOF). We had a rich and special weekend in February at Camp Mak-a-Dream, with other dear Montana Quakers. MGOF is currently deciding how this wonderful fellowship will continue during the Covid-19 crisis since Luccock Park will be closed for summer 2020.

In addition, Missoula Friends have experienced a number of hardships this year, including the continuing decrease in our membership, which has resulted in fewer financial gifts from Friends. This has prompted us to consider ways to reduce our expenses. In late April Richard Dunn, a long time member and attender to our Meeting, died. In reflecting on his life and contributions to our Meeting we found Richard spoke to the condition of many Friends with words he wrote when seeking to be recognized as a member of our Meeting: "... being a Quaker is not being a member of a passive group and that quite conceivably my thoughts and impressions – built up over the course of a lifetime and sometimes worn comfortably, perhaps too comfortably – will be challenged. I hope that this is the case." In addition a number of Friends have gone through loss of family members, operations and hospitalizations or other family traumas. Many have reported that they have felt held in the Light and loving care of the Meeting over these difficult times and have expressed heartfelt gratitude for this caring and support.

Perhaps the global pandemic gives us opportunity to reflect on what really matters when we are challenged to "be the Meeting" in new ways



Bozeman Worship Group

To Friends everywhere:

How do we find words to describe the change that we have encountered in the last year? Some concerns seem trivial by comparison to the global challenges we face with the

Corona virus pandemic. Others are just as worrisome as they were a year ago, climate change and immigration injustice, for example.

Way back in September we had our annual business meeting. There was interest at that time in the concept of Spiritual Nurture Groups but we concluded that we were not quite ready yet. One consistent energy arising quietly in worship and informal discussion was a concern for the worship group to be involved in some sort of social action as a group.

Seemingly out of the blue came just such an opportunity when we became connected with an effort to address the needs of some Honduran families who have moved to Bozeman, often working in Big Sky. Five of our group became active in working on this issue. Since then two Friends developed a mentoring program which has grown much beyond our worship group. Funds for our project of be-friending Honduran families were received from all over the state and used in many ways. One friend drove a Honduran individual all the way to Salt Lake City and another to Kansas for immigration hearings. Looking back it is fascinating to see that we put "out there" the interest in a social justice project and, lo and behold, we had one in front of us!

In December we met for our annual potluck and worship sharing. Once again we had many people (21) and a lovely time.

We continued to meet at the campus Christian Center, Christus Collegium. Then in March everything started to change as we realized that we were in a global pandemic. By late March we were meeting by Zoom, finding it vital to be together in the way that was possible while missing the physical closeness and energy of being present to each other physically. An unexpected side benefit of Zoom is that we have been enriched by the participation of Friends who are otherwise too far away to regularly attend. We find that we like worship sharing more often.

Now as our country's dark under side has been laid open for all to see, we are exploring what we can do about that, how we can take action that is centered in inner guidance, love and hope. We continue to find that seeking wisdom within and from the light in each other provides us with a north star in this time of great challenge. We are finding ways to take make small acts of kindness and support of others, finding political will to act and listening deeply to how Spirit is moving among us.



Memorial Minute for Alice Elaine Berry Miller

Alice Miller, age 77, died on January 30, 2020, peacefully in the company of her family at Peace Hospice in Great Falls, Montana. Alice was born May 14, 1942, to Bertie and Blanche Berry in Bridger, Montana. She was the second youngest of 11 children. She graduated from Bridger High School in 1960 and moved to Great Falls, Montana. Alice married Dennis Miller in 1962 and they had two children, Kimberly and Todd. They later divorced.

Alice was a strong single mother as she pursued a career in nursing, graduating with a BSN from MSU, Bozeman. She worked as a pediatric nurse specialist at Benefis Health Care for 30 years. During this time she was in the Army reserves achieving the rank of Lt. Colonel. On her 75 birthday she travelled to Tanzania for a month to help on a medical mission. For over 20 years Alice had a special relationship with her partner, Starshine. Together the two of them travelled the world from a Yukon River canoe trip to a voyage along the coast of Turkey. With a group of eight Wild Women friends, they originally canoed the Boundary Waters of Minnesota and after that they rafted or canoed local Montana rivers as well as the Grand Canyon. Alice was a special friend to many in the community, and always made herself available to help. She always had a spare bed available and gave rides to the airport in the wee hours of the morning.

Alice participated in the Montana Gathering of Friends, our local Great Falls Worship Group, and retreats of Quaker women. She also went to North Pacific Yearly Meeting several times in support of local Friends. She brought to us a clear and simple message of how to be present in the now. Her presence during worship was very grounding. At her last Quaker meeting shortly before her death, she declared that she would support young adults in traveling to a Quaker lobbying weekend in Washington, DC. With her contribution declared, others jumped in to make it possible.

Alice was a devoted mother, grandmother and great grandmother. She was always involved with care taking, visits, and music for her family. She attended football games, travelled to see a granddaughter in her station in the Army, and had pedicures with another granddaughter. She enjoyed swimming with others, and just hanging out. She was a powerful and strong role model for her whole family. She will be tremendously missed by all.

Alice will be remembered for her strength, wisdom, her guidance, encouraging words of love, her wonderful laugh, her witty sense of humor, and her love for her family and her many Friends and friends.

In her memory, it is suggested we plant a tree.



Summer MGOF Co-ordinator Report - Luccock Park Aug 15-18, 2019

The Montana Gathering of Friends met at Luccock Park over the weekend of August 15-18, 2019. The theme was From Spirit to Action and Action to Spirit. Resource persons were Peter Husby and Linnea Wang from our own meeting. They presented the sequence of events in their lives that have led to their current commitment to action on the southwest border between Mexico and the United States from their winter base in Tucson. The presentation was well received and formed the foundation for our time together.

Other activities included a series of short skits as an ice breaker and intergenerational welcome. Claire and Linnea supplied props, costumes and scripts (quotations). A potluck dinner was held on Friday night—a real surprise to the staff at Luccock and some of us Friends. Worship Sharing was organized by the Ministry and Council Committee. A morning Bible study discussion time was held each day by Joseph Snyder. The only interest groups were those led by Peter and Linnea. Reading of the Memorial Minutes was held in the chapel. An excellent Community Night was organized and produced by the youth. Kate Weiss led a popular workshop on making mandalas as a form of worship on Thursday.

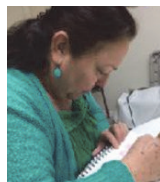
We experienced delightful weather. Attendance was a bit lower than is typical and we especially missed some “regulars” and young people.

Arrangements for the gathering were hampered in part by having an inexperienced coordinator and a new registrar. There had been no attempt to clarify what each position was responsible for what parts of the organizing or what needed to be “organized” or arranged. The coordinator’s handbook that had been compiled over several years has been lost. We were unable to locate a contract with Luccock and they did not have one either. The Camp Manager was also new to the job. Linnea and I have put together a new notebook using materials still on her computer from the original.

Luccock plans to make some changes next year and there were some changes that had already been made but we had not been told about so were not held to. It is likely that there will not be a functional kitchen in Glendive next year. Rather than charging for individual meals separately and an overnight fee, they plan to have one meals and overnight combined fee which will be slightly higher than this summer. We would not have an option of having meals on our own for a reduced price. We would also need to specify the buildings that we would be using including where we would hold events in case of rain. The new pricing fits well with our abundant giving plan since individuals are not paying for individuals meals, etc. anyway.



Greeting Cards With Art by Emma



Emma learned to paint while living in Sanctuary in a church basement from 2017-18. Proceeds from card sales with photos of Emma's work are applied toward legal and other expenses as she pursues her immigration case from abroad. Visit www.sanctuaryworks.org to order cards and support a wonderful Friend in her quest to rejoin family and friends in the States.

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